

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 20, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

Speaker of the House

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

Thank you for your steadfast leadership and commitment to investing funds in combating climate change in the upcoming budget reconciliation package. We write to express our support for a Civilian Climate Corps (CCC) funded at \$30 billion in the Build Back Better Act.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned that humanity has changed the Earth's climate in an unprecedented manner, with some of those changes now irreversible. Last year, we experienced a record breaking twenty-two extreme weather events totaling \$98.9 billion in losses. As we make public investments in building a clean and resilient economy that works for all of us, we will need a substantial budgetary commitment to building the physical and social infrastructure that will make communities climate-resilient and establish a clean workforce. By providing \$30 billion for the new CCC, we can ensure that this program is equitable, accessible to all, and established at the size and scale we need to respond to the climate crisis and create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs with a pathway to union membership.

President Biden recognized the wisdom of funding a new CCC when he included it as part of his American Jobs Plan and the FY2022 budget, and since that initial proposal, it has become clear that the CCC could be deployed in more sectors and reach more communities if properly funded. Further, on September 10th, 120 organizations representing labor, conservation, youth, national service, and movements for racial, economic, and climate justice wrote to Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer to express support for \$30 billion in funding for a new Civilian Climate Corps. Fully funding the CCC will provide employment opportunities that will reduce climate impacts on communities and mitigate the crisis, while prioritizing investments in historically disadvantaged groups. Adequate funding for the Corps could allow it to electrify appliances and improve weatherization and insulation in low-income households; build natural solutions for stormwater overflow; install solar panels for community solar projects; clear brush and other wildfire fuel; or restore dunes and replant vegetation to enhance coastal resilience, among other activities. Further, there exists in the United States a large backlog of projects that would benefit from a CCC workforce and whose completion would help us achieve climate resilience, environmental remediation, conservation, and the construction of sustainable infrastructure projects. The National Park System, for example, has a deferred maintenance backlog worth \$13 billion. Similarly, accelerating coastal erosion is responsible for \$500 million in damages each year and the loss of 80,000 acres of coastline. The people's budget should prioritize these efforts. With sufficient public investments, a CCC could complete all these projects – all while working alongside unions to build a well-paid green workforce.

Specifically, we support sufficient funding to enable a Civilian Climate Corps that:

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- **Is established quickly and seamlessly as a single, unified, and visible program that gets to work swiftly on climate priorities:** The budget should provide funding for a central entity within the White House tasked with overseeing its implementation. Cross-agency collaboration will be a feature of the CCC, with a flagship program at AmeriCorps rapidly scaling up and coordinating agreements with the Department of Labor, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Department of Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Energy, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce, and others to ensure cross-sector presence. Robust funding for these agencies and partnerships will allow for greater workforce capabilities, expanded hiring authority and increased job opportunities for CCC participants.
- **Provides good pay, benefits, job opportunities, and educational awards for participants:** The budget should ensure that all members of the CCC receive at least \$15 per hour, or its equivalent, and generous educational awards to attend college or reduce student loan debt. Furthermore, the CCC is an investment in workforce development; members will receive training along with their service resulting in transferable skills that will enable them to participate in a clean economy. Existing non-compete provisions in the AmeriCorps statute prevent the CCC from displacing organized labor, and as such, it is designed to complement, rather than compete, with union labor. Unions already collaborate with AmeriCorps on pre-apprenticeship programs, which could be expanded with robust CCC funding.
- **Enables a diverse population to participate:** The budget must ensure that the CCC recruit 50% of its Corps members from disadvantaged communities, thereby correcting historic disparities in employment. A fully funded CCC can support diversity throughout our clean energy workforce, including age, gender, geographic, and racial diversity. This funding must also create pathways to recruit formerly incarcerated or justice-involved individuals and ensure immigration status is not a barrier to participation.
- **Enlists as many individuals as possible to work on impactful climate projects through a top line of \$30 billion:** Every additional dollar allocated to the CCC would result in a greater number of positions created. Because CCC funds will be used to raise labor standards for all national service members, it is imperative that we fund the program adequately. Funding the CCC at \$30 billion will allow the Corps to provide a living wage and sufficient educational benefits to its members, as well as create tens of thousands of new jobs and new service positions. A less ambitious funding level would affect the available benefits, imperiling the ability of lower- and moderate-income individuals to participate.

The devastating effects of climate change will continue increasing in frequency, extremity, and range. Congress has a unique opportunity to fund and support a new Civilian Climate Corps and to invest in enlisting Americans from all walks of life in preventing and responding to this continued threat. As Congressional committees finalize the writing, debating, and voting of standalone pieces of the Build Back Better Act in the U.S. House of Representatives, we strongly urge the final version of the reconciliation package to reflect the \$30 billion investment in the CCC.

Sincerely,



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush  
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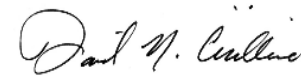
Cori Bush  
Member of Congress

/s/

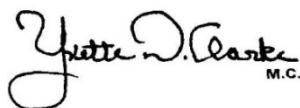
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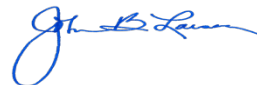
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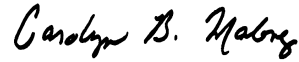


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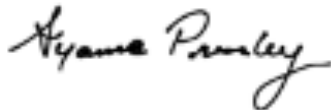
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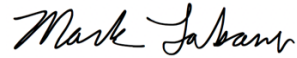
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Adam Smith  
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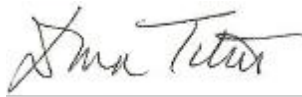
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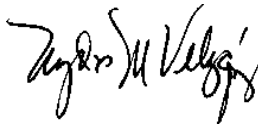
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